Conclusion.
At the outset it can be said that the population of Maharashtra, like that of India, is predominantly rural\(^1\) in character, and that its main source of maintenance is agriculture\(^2\) (Refer map no.26). Non-availability of large variety of economic minerals is the main reason for such a great dependance on agriculture. Even the two major industries of Maharashtra -- cotton textiles and sugar -- depend on agriculture for their requirements of raw materials like cotton and sugarcane. The successful growth of these two crops on a large scale is possible because of the favourable environmental factors.

The distribution of population in Maharashtra is, therefore, influenced by the physical factors both directly and indirectly. Direct influence, which is quite wide-spread, is indicated by its dependance on agriculture, and the indirect influence is exercised through the supply of agricultural raw materials to industries which attract population.

**Direct Influence** :-

Agriculture depends mainly on such physical factors as surface configuration, soil cover, rainfall etc. These factors, then, influence in a major degree the distribution

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1. About 75 per cent of the population lives in rural areas

\(\checkmark\) Refer map no. 16 \(\checkmark\)

2. About 70 per cent of the population depends directly on agriculture.
of population in Maharashtra.

The surface configuration is not totally unfavourable for agricultural activities, although a good portion of Maharashtra has uneven topography, which is due to the fact that much of Maharashtra's area is made up of the upper courses of the Peninsular rivers, and consequently of moderate agricultural utility.

The uneven topography accounts for the presence of large tracts with comparatively thin soil cover, particularly in the western parts. The central and eastern regions have a comparatively deep soil cover.

The rainfall exercises a far reaching influence. It is of monsoonal origin and hence not completely reliable. The situation is still aggravated when it is observed that a very extensive area -- which is fairly level and has a good soil cover -- falls in the rainshadow area of the massive Sahyadri, which, with a general height of above 2500 feet above sea level, runs through the whole length of Maharashtra transverse to the incoming moisture-laden south-west monsoons (Refer map no.11).

The profound influence of rainfall on the distribution of population is quite clear by the fact that the Konkan, despite of its uneven topography and lateritic soil cover, records high density of population (361 people), for it receives an abundant rainfall of 50 to 200 inches. The Interior Upland and the Basins of Tapi and Narmada, on the other hand, have fairly level lands with good soil cover, but receive only a
marginal amount of rainfall (20 to 30 inches) in most of their areas. Consequently they record a low density of population (270 people). The district of Kolhapur, though situated in the Upland, records highest density of population (441 people) in Maharashtra, because it has the advantage of combining high rainfall\(^4\) (70 inches annual average) and fertile soil.

Each district in its turn lends support to these observations. Talukas with high densities of population have fairly level land, good soil cover and sufficient water supply. This is to be particularly seen in the districts of Nasik, Poona, North Satara, and South Satara whose western talukas are hilly and receive good rainfall (above 50 inches) and the eastern talukas are comparatively level but with a marginal rainfall (about 20 to 25 inches), hence neither of them record good population density. The central belt of talukas

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\(^4\) Kolhapur receives the highest rainfall amongst the districts of the Upland (Refer map no.10). In fact this district is the beginning of an area extending southwards which, inspite of its leeward position, gets high rainfall. This is attributable to the fact that the western edge of the Plateau is lower in the southern part of the Bombay State, and further south, the area receives a supplementary rainfall from the north-east monsoons.
are the most fortunate of all in striking a balance between the two, and hence record comparatively fair density of population. (Refer maps no.11 and 14).

In case of the eastern districts like East Khandesh, Sholapur etc. all talukas have fairly level lands but the rainfall is enough only in the easternmost talukas which show a comparatively high density of population. (Refer map no.14)

**Indirect Influence** :-

The industries, both major and minor, have helped the growth of population of the places like Poona, Sholapur, Kolhapur, Tikekarwadi, Walchandnagar, Belapur, Shrirampur etc. However the industries here (cotton textiles and sugar) depend on agriculture—hence on the physical factors—for their raw material requirements.

Sugar factories require a very extensive acreage under sugar-cane, which in turn requires fertile soil and abundant water supply. Fertile soil is available in the central and eastern parts of the Upland but the abundance of water is possible only where canal irrigation has been introduced. This is to be seen in the central belt and accordingly most of the sugar factories, with their accompanying sizable population, are located there.

Cotton textile centres such as Sholapur, Tikekarwadi, Ichalkaranji, Dhulia etc. are situated in the cotton-growing tract, where black cotton soil and the suitable climate make extensive cultivation of cotton possible. Since ages hand-loom industry has been flourishing in rural areas.
however the modern textile mill has concentrated the industry in few favourably situated centres which attract population.

The presence of Bombay, geographically in Maharashtra, has a very important influence on the Konkan districts. The district of Thana contains many large settlements like Thana, Kalyan, Borivli etc., which serve as residential suburbs for the industrial and commercial centre of Bombay. Besides, it is interesting to note that recently there has been a clear tendency on the part of Bombay industries -- particularly the light type -- to locate along the railway in Thana district where they can exploit the advantage of cheap site while still retaining the excellent facilities - of capital, transport and harbour - available at nearby Bombay. Hence the cultural pattern of this area is under the direct influence of the adjacent Metropolitan centre, the absence of which would have given rise to the same distributional pattern as can be seen in South Konkan. In this context it is important to note that the growth and prosperity of Bombay itself are primarily dependent on the physical factors such as its deep anchorage, sheltered harbour, location on west coast of India nearest to Western and African countries, existence of two low-lying gaps in the Western Ghats near it, thus facilitating its linking with the hinterland, etc.

It can thus be concluded that the general pattern of distribution of population in Maharashtra exhibits a conspicuous dependence on the physical factors. Particularly surface configuration and water supply are the major influences. Modifications introduced by cultural factors are comparatively few.

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